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Copy No. 1

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR POLICY COORDINATION

SUBJECT: "OPC Strategic Plan"

1. Enclosed is an estimate of the World Situation, 1 July 1951 to 30 June 1953, prepared by this Office at your request for inclusion in the "OPC Strategic Plan."

2. The enclosed estimate has been prepared, as requested, on the basic assumption that general war will not take place within the next two years. The fact that we have prepared the enclosed estimate in the light of this basic assumption should in no way be construed as estimative verification of its validity. For your information, O/NE's estimate on the probability of general war is that the USSR is unlikely in the next twelve months deliberately to precipitate general war with the US, but that there is a serious possibility of general war developing within the next twelve months from an action or series of actions not intended by the Kremlin to precipitate general war.

3. The attached estimate should be used with reserve in planning not only because of the uncertainty of the basic assumption that there will not be a general war but also because it attempts to project our current estimates to cover a two-year period, as required by the OPC plan. We find it very difficult in view of the complex factors involved to project an estimate so broad in scope beyond a twelve-month period.

4. The following are O/NE's comments on the specific assumptions contained in the "OPC Strategic Plan" as now drafted. (These comments are brief and deal only with major points, since you will probably wish to have the assumptions rewritten in the light of O/NE's estimate.)

a. (Assumptions 1 and 2): That the cold war will "continue to grow in intensity" during the next two years is doubtless a legitimate assumption for planning purposes, but that it "will develop to a point which is virtually indistinguishable from a traditional state of war" is going

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too far. We would suggest that the intensity of the cold war will fluctuate in general accordance with the degrees and methods of political warfare practiced by each side, that there may be occasional critical incidents threatening to precipitate general war, and that these incidents will from time to time cause a heightening of international tension.

b. (Assumption 3): If this assumption is based on the premise that the overt use of Soviet forces in any area would precipitate general war, we believe the assumption should be changed to indicate Soviet troops might be used in certain areas under certain circumstances (e.g., in Iran) without the certainty of precipitating general war. Similarly, Soviet occupation of Finland would not necessarily precipitate general war.

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d. (Assumption 5): This assumption would be more accurate if changed to read:

"If attacks are not launched against the countries listed in 4 above, the USSR will undoubtedly continue its efforts to bring those countries under its control by all means short of overt military attack by Soviet or satellite forces. Furthermore, such Soviet efforts can be expected against France, Italy, West Germany (including Berlin), Austria (including Vienna), Greece, the Arab States and Israel, Afghanistan, India, Thailand, Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines."

e. (Assumption 8): In the light of current trends, we believe this assumption to be over-optimistic. For planning purposes, we believe it would be safer to assume that the NATO powers will, in 1953, still be capable of no more than a delaying action in the face of a determined Soviet assault.

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WILLIAM L. LANGER
Assistant Director
National Estimates

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